

Who Shall Meet Me First?

Composed while sitting alone thinking of the many dear friends God has called home.

Who shall meet me first in heaven,
When that blissful realm I gain,
When the hands have ceased from toiling
And the heart has ceased from pain,
When the last farewell is spoken,
Severed the last tender tie,
And I know how sweet, how solemn,
And how blest it is to die.

As my bark glides o'er the waters
Oft the cold and silent stream,
I shall see the domes of temples,
In the distance brightly gleaming;
Temples of that beautiful city
From all guilt and sorrow free,
Who adorn its golden portals,
First will hast to welcome me.

Who will meet me first in glory?
Oft the earnest thought will rise,
Musing on the unknown wonders
Of that home beyond the skies.
Who will be my heavenly mentor,
Will it be some seraph bright,
Or an angel from the countless
Myriads of that world of light?

No not these for they have never
Gladdened here my view,
But the dear ones gone before—
They, the loved, the tried the true—
They, who walked with me life's pathway,
From my side by death were riven,
They who loved me best in this world,
Will be first to greet in heaven.

C. R. K.

Paul's Versatility Turned to Advantage.

In the person of Paul we have an example of a life zealously devoted to the cause he conscientiously espoused from the beginning to the close of his remarkable career. From his youth up which was from the beginning among his own people at Jerusalem, where we are told, he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law, taught to observe all the rigid peculiarities of the tradition of the elders according to their own literal interpretations, a strict Pharisee. Here Paul utilized his superior advantages in acquiring the education and discipline essential to accomplish his work as delineated before his own imagination. Notwithstanding his success in this undertaking, the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom whence his usefulness is dated had yet to be accomplished. This of necessity had to take place in a school quite different from the one Paul was as yet familiar with. Not at the feet of the renowned Gamaliel, but at the feet of Christ had he to learn the wisdom and knowledge yet lacking. After being introduced to this new teacher, he asked for and received wisdom, light and knowledge of such a revolutionary nature as he had never anticipated. In this school he attained to proficiency, received his genuine scholastic degree signed and sealed by his teacher as a guarantee of his adequate qualification for the work assigned him.

He now realized the necessity of dropping as nonessential many of the rigid and formal Pharisaical devotions heretofore entertained and deemed essential to ensure God's approbation. He also realized the necessity of becoming accommodating and pliable enough with his own acquired prejudices and established customs as to adapt himself, when necessary, to the customs, conditions and circumstances of all stages of society. He not only accommodated himself to such customs by submitting to them, but having an important object in view, he also conformed to the same as far as consistent with reason and his profession, he also directed his disciples to do likewise. Paul did not consider himself as bound to any of these local customs, notwithstanding he adopted them to accomplish his ends, for he says, 'unto the Jew I become as a Jew, to them that are under the law, as under the law, to them that are without law as without law, to the weak I become as weak, I become all things to all men that I might by all means save some.' We must not understand from this that Paul received or taught a doctrine anything foreign to what he had received from his true teacher whom at first he persecuted. Neither did he deviate in any degree

from the universal doctrine comprehending the great plan of salvation,

Here it becomes very important for every true believer, teacher and disciple to exercise reason and judgment to discriminate the great doctrine comprehending the great plan of salvation as taught by Christ and his apostles, the doctrine which was designed to become perpetuated and observed in all future time from the artifice and expedients resorted to by Paul to successfully introduce his new doctrine and procure recruits for the same.

If this discrimination was properly made as it should be little of the apparent grounds which the enemies of Christianity claim for their arguments when they assert the inconsistency of Paul would remain. The enemies of Christianity claim that Paul is inconsistent with himself, since his teachings, they claim, are not uniform in principle but contradictory, some he would have circumcised and forbade it to others, with the Jews he observed the ceremonial law but ignored it with the Gentiles commended women for their usefulness as teacher, prophets and workers with him in the Gospel, then forbade them intirely to speak in the churches, then again permitted them to speak or prophecy when veiled.

Many more similar instances do they point out to find fault with. There is another class perhaps not as numerous as the one described, but detrimental to the cause of Christianity on account of its greatest influence. Those people are well meaning, but mistaken in their comprehension, they desire the promotion of the cause of Christ but like the Puritans of old, take a toad's eye view of their surroundings then conclude they know all things to perfection, consequently have no charity for different views taken from a more elevated position.

It is not the intention here to censure the lives of the 'Puritan Fathers' as they are generally called, they were a people whom we may well be proud of, their virtues were many, and taking the times in which they lived and the circumstances into consideration their weaknesses can well be excused. But at the present time, with the advantages we possess there is no excuse for bigotry, superstition or obstinate indolence. Yet it is a lamentable fact that these drawbacks so penurious to the Christian spirit still do exist in an unpardonable degree, entertained and cherished by many professed followers of Christ. Regardless of the example and teachings of Paul, these people refuse to look up and behold the sublimity of the great work accomplished, but they look down where their scope is very limited, where they see one or more of the means Paul had made use of in his time, but now useless and like a fossil shell lying on the ground, they pick it up and for the want of something better proceed to make doctrine out of it, for which it was never intended.

Now they cling to these preconceived ideas with obstinate tenacity and uncompromisingly insist upon having them inscribed in bold relief in the confession of faith. These are formidable obstructions thrown in the way of progress of Christianity. It is an evident fact, if Paul had attempted to introduce his new doctrine by first attacking the long established customs of the people, deeply rooted in tradition and guarded with superstitious jealousies, he would at once have forfeited all his influence and hope of success. But wisdom suggested to meet these local customs as he found them, by giving directions which varied as the customs of different localities and nations varied.

Paul was not the man to give arbitrary and meaningless commands without an aim or object, but wisdom is manifested in all operations and his motive become obvious in every instance. Paul like a wise husbandman always prepared the soil before he attempted to sow the gospel seed. But before he could prepare the soil he had to gain access to it, then he found the soil in an unproductive condition, but by no means in other respects alike, then it becomes necessary to employ different means and implements to bring it to a state of fertility. But when the soil is once prepared, the same seed was invariably sown.

All customs which Paul undertook to regulate

or to which he subscribed were local, subservient to the times in which they originated and differed as the wants and circumstances of the people and nations differed, hence the instructions which Paul gave concerning such customs had of necessity to differ also.

This proves that such instructions were never intended for doctrine to become perpetuated by having them incorporated into the Christian code. For Paul's mission was not local, from the part that the Lord said, 'He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my voice before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.' To substantiate the foregoing arguments we will refer to a few instances which must be considered conclusive. 1 Cor. 14 chap. 'Let your women keep silent in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak.' The primary reason for giving such injunction is already explained, but Paul here gives a secondary reason and says, 'for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. In the eleventh chapter of 1 Cor. we read, 'Every women that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head' 'If the woman be not covered let her also be shorn, but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.' 'Judge in yourself: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered,' etc.

All the positions assumed here by Paul culminates into the same secondary reason given before, namely, 'it is a shame.' Since Paul appeals to our own reason or judgment in this matter, we should try to exercise it properly by inquiring, why it is a shame.

In remote prehistoric times, before Moses wrote the first scripture and before the people heard of the true and living God, and when they yet lived in dark superstitious ignorance, when brutal force and bodily strength were substituted for reason, selfish desires for justice to adjust all differences and when men considered themselves as lords on account of their imagined superior abilities, then and there women were reduced to abject slavery in its most degraded form, estimated by their masters and lords, to whom they presumably owed unreserved obedience and unconditional subjection in all things, as fit only to minister to their desires and gratifications, but not fit to be seen in public, consequently they were consigned to utter seclusion. To this time those relics of barbarism, the remaining peculiar exactions from women in Paul's time can be traced.

As men advanced in civilization and approached nearer to a completion of right, the unjust restriction laid upon woman gradually became less, until they were permitted to show themselves in public, but not at first, without being veiled, hence the signification of the veil, an emblem of being under the unrestrained power and authority of her husband or lord.

In the time of Paul enough of these primitive, ancient customs still remained to cause the modesty of the Gentiles to be shocked to see a woman in public unveiled, still more so to hear her express her sentiments or impart instruction, no difference how important or useful for this was considered as usurping the authority of men, hence Paul's directions concerning their virtues. But now since their old customs have become obsolete and the last vestige of them has disappeared, it is no longer considered as a shame for a woman to speak or appear unveiled in public and the reason which Paul gives to deprive her from doing so has been removed, no grounds remain to necessitate their observance they must of necessity fall to the ground. And we can begin to realize that 'God is no respecter of persons.'

That these regulations which Paul recommended concerning the observance of these customs were never given as mandatory is plain since they did not originate with the church, nor were they held as tenets of the primitive church. To this position we have the testimony of Paul himself. Paul after giving directions how to conform to these customs says, 'If any man seems to be contentious, (that is, if any believer, objects to conform to these customs) we have no such customs neither the church of God.' So the directions given for the observance of these customs can not be obligatory